



**Rhode Island Department of Human Services**

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June 18, 2020

Honorable Patricia A. Serpa, Chairwoman  
House Committee on Oversight  
101 State House  
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairwoman Serpa:

Please accept the attached report as the State's most recent update on the RIBridges system, which covers the reporting period May 16, 2020 – June 15, 2020. This document provides monthly updates on the following topics:

- System performance and improvement;
- DHS staffing and employee training;
- Pending applications;
- SNAP timeliness and lobby/DHS Call Center summaries;
- CCAP off-cycle payments;
- LTSS interim payments and;
- Correspondence with federal partners (if any)

We appreciate your continued advocacy on behalf of those we serve, your interest in the health of the RIBridges system and the progress made to address outstanding issues. As always, please contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CHAWKINS", written in a cursive style.

Courtney E. Hawkins, Director



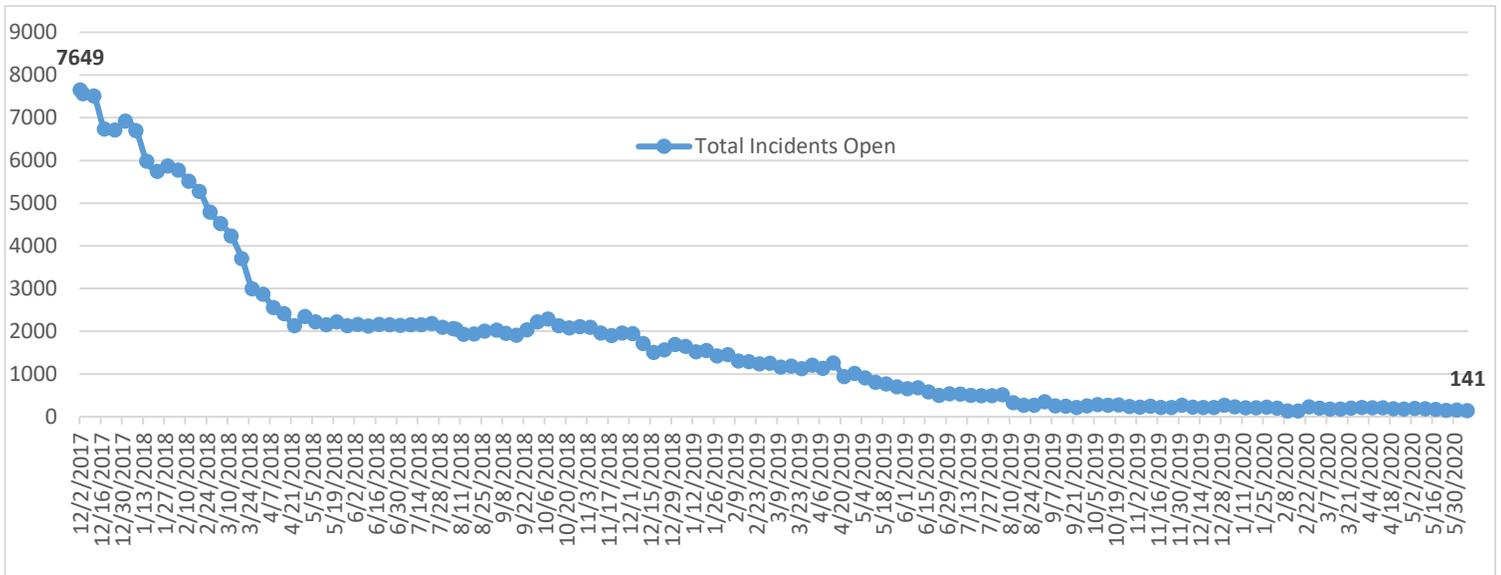
# RI Bridges: Monthly Update

## June 2020

Our team takes its charge seriously in promoting health, nurturing quality of life, and being there for Rhode Islanders when needed. Our oversight of work on RIBridges is an important part of the equation. With significant improvements to system stabilization under our belt, we are looking ahead to refocus our efforts on ensuring full compliance of the system. This report provides an update on our efforts and progress to date.

### SYSTEM PERFORMANCE + IMPROVEMENT

Due to a focused effort on consistent and stable system operations, the number of new and existing incidents (when the system does not operate as expected for a DHS client, worker or provider) has decreased by more than 98% since December 2017. As of June 8, 2020, open incidents totaled just 141.



### DHS STAFFING + TRAINING

#### Hiring Update

DHS has resumed hiring for critical positions. Since May, DHS hired three employees. This includes:

- 1 Eligibility Technician dedicated to the Providence Field Office
- 1 Supervising Eligibility Technician dedicated to the Middletown Field Office
- 1 Head Start Collaboration Director dedicated to the Office of Child Care

## Training Overview

### Overview

Training Topic	Training Date	# of Training Hours	# of New Staff	# of Current Staff
<i>New Hire Orientation (4 – 2-hour sessions)</i>	6-1-2020 6-2-2020	8	4	0
<i>SNAP Training (9 – 1-hour sessions)</i>	5-22-2020 – 6-10-2020	9	12	0
<i>Health Insurance and Resources (2 – 3-hours sessions)</i>	5-26-2020 5-28-2020	6	0	12
Procedure for Assistant Living	5-26-2020	1	0	13
<i>Scanning and Indexing Training (2 – 30-minute sessions)</i>	5-26-2020 5-28-2020	1	0	11
Case Maintenance (5 – 30 – minutes sessions)	5-18-2020 5-19-2020 5-26-2020 6-2-2020 6-8-2020	2.5	0	49
<i>RIW: Relationship Requirement (5-45-minute sessions)</i>	5-19-2020 5-21-2020 5-28-2020 6-2-2020 6-9-2020	3.75	0	43
<i>RIW: Adding a Pregnancy (4-45-minute sessions)</i>	5-19-2020 5-21-2020 6-2-2020 6-9-2020	10.5	0	52
<i>RIW: Adding a Newborn (2-45-minute sessions)</i>	5-28-2020 6-4-2020	1.5	0	33
<i>RIW: Non-Custodial Parent</i>	6-4-2020	.75	0	17
<i>Income and Health Insurance (2 – 3-hour sessions)</i>	5-19-2020 5-21-2020	6	0	48
<i>Resource Referral</i>	5-19-2020	1	0	17
<i>Spousal Allowances</i>	5-22-2020	1	0	20
<i>GPA Burial (4-30-minutes sessions)</i>	5-22-2020 (2) 5-26-2020 6-9-2020	2	0	32

<i>Knowledge Transfers</i> (2-15-minute sessions)	6-2-2020	.5	0	11
	6-3-2020			
<i>Retroactive Eligibility</i> (3-3-hour sessions)	6-2-2020	9	0	54
	6-4-2020			
	6-5-2020			
<i>Sherlock Eligibility Training</i> (2-3-hour sessions)	6-9-2020	6	0	44
	6-11-2020			
<b>Totals</b>		<b>69.5</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>456*</b>

*\*current number of staff trained is a duplicate number*

### Workshop Descriptions

**Knowledge Transfer Training:** The purpose of these sessions is to communicate the system updates/changes to the attendees. The learning goals are:

- Explain new knowledge transfer process for releases
- Review each new/updated QRG, flash, etc. related to the upcoming release in the month of January.
- Recognize the end user impact of the system updates

**Case Maintenance:** This training focuses on standardizing processes associated with working cases in RI Bridges. It is a remote training delivered via Zoom. The learning outcomes for the training are as follows:

- Understand the Case Maintenance Checklist
- Learn where to find helpful documents (QRGs, Transmittals, etc.)
- Understand proper case maintenance practices

### RIW Mini Trainings

The RIWorks Mini-Series is a 4-part series designed to provide participants with snapshots of information for RIW non-financial eligibility factors. This E-learning experience will take participants through Key Concepts, RIBridges screens and Demos as they relate to each topic.

- Adding a Pregnancy – participants will learn about 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester pregnancy as a special circumstance and how this a gateway for eligibility for moms with no children in the home.
- Relationship Requirements – participants will hear how relationship impacts eligibility for RIW and what the term Loco Parentis means.
- Adding a Newborn – participants will gain an understanding of what information is collected at the time of birth and why it matters.
- Non-Custodial Parent Information – participants will Learn why collecting NCP data matters and the role of the Office of Child Support Services when collecting NCP information.

**New Hire Orientation:** The New Employee Orientation (NEO) Program is the first step in welcoming new hires to RIDHS. Its main objective is to familiarize new employees with the organization, its organizational structure, and its policies and procedures.

**Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP):** The SNAP Training is designed to introduce Eligibility Technicians to SNAP program policy and RIBridges. The virtual sessions are focused on SNAP policy.

**Scanning and Indexing** - The goal of the training is to instruct CSA's on the appropriate use of Smart Separators and the Scanning and Indexing process. Participants will gain an understanding of Smart Separators and the Scanning & Indexing process.

**Health and Insurance and Resources** – This training covers the policy surrounding countable and excluded resources for Medicaid and LTSS applications and renewals. Participants will view resource documentation, understand how to calculate total countable resources and be able to enter resources into the IES system.

**Income and Health Insurance** -This training covers the policy surrounding income, including income disregards and exclusions for Medicaid and LTSS applications and renewals. Participants will understand how to compare applicant's income to income standards and be able to enter income into the IES system.

**Procedures for Assistant Living** – This training will inform participants on the process flow for Assisted Living applications, including the role of community and agency partners such as Office of Healthy Aging and Community Action Program Agencies. Participants will understand the eligibility criteria for Assisted Living and be able to calculate Beneficiary Liability for program participants.

**Resource Referral** - Participants will understand the most common sources for completing a resource referral, including Annuities, Trusts and Promissory Note. Participants will learn how to complete resource referrals, the process for having them reviewed and entering them into the IES system. Participants will also gain understanding of the policy for the three complicated financial instruments (Annuities, Trusts and Promissory Notes) and how these may impact the resources, income and review for transfer of assets for applicants.

**Spousal Allowance** - This training provides a brief overview of the Beneficiary Liability process, concentrating on the Spousal Allowance Deduction. Applicant will practice calculating spousal allowance.

**Sherlock Eligibility** - This training will focus on eligibility pathways and considerations for Working Adults with Disabilities, including the impact of the Sherlock Consent Form. Participants will practice entering Sherlock Choice into the IES and understand the Sherlock Choice for those with multiple eligibility pathways, both in LTSS and Non-LTSS Medicaid. The policy for income disregards, exclusions and therapeutic employment are reviewed as well as the Sherlock Medicaid Buy-In Program. Participants will understand the process flow for cases with multiple eligibility pathways and eligibility requirements for each program.

**Retroactive Eligibility** – This training will help participants understand the programs which offer retroactive eligibility coverage and the policy for determining retroactive eligibility. Participants will practice entering data for each retroactive month request in the IES system.

**GPA Burial** - This training focuses on introducing ESSU staff to GPA Burial, including a program overview, a description of the GPA Burial application requirements, and a demo of processing the application in RIBridges. It is the first part of a 3-4 part series.

## PENDING NEW APPLICATIONS

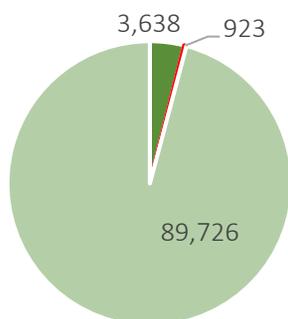
The State continues to prioritize access to benefits. As of June 14, 2020, the number of pending new applications across all programs is 3,258. The total of overdue pending applications awaiting State action is 1,302.

	Not Overdue			Overdue			Total
	Client	State	Total	Client	State	Total	
SNAP Expedited	9	21	30	9	14	23	53
SNAP Non-Expedited	177	132	309	150	30	180	489
CCAP	4	31	35	0	4	4	39
GPA Burial	0	1	1	0	1	1	2
SSP	0	49	49	0	5	5	54
GPA	14	17	31	18	15	33	64
RIW	42	38	80	27	14	41	121
Undetermined Medical	5	121	126	31	699	730	856
Medicaid-MAGI	0	1	1	55	58	113	114
MPP	0	24	24	2	6	8	32
Complex Medicaid	5	14	19	20	93	113	132
LTSS*	62	812	874	65	363	428	1302
<b>Totals</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>1,261</b>	<b>1,579</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>1,302</b>	<b>1,679</b>	<b>3,258</b>

\*LTSS backlog data is temporarily coming from a separate source from RIBridges while the primary dashboard that collects data is currently undergoing improvements.

## SNAP TIMELINESS

DHS continues to make progress in improving customer service. The timeliness for SNAP applications was approximately 80% for expedited and 99% for non-expedited for May 2020. SNAP timeliness was 56% in November 2017. We have achieved more than 90% timeliness from April 2018 through May 2020. A rapid response team immediately works to resolve any issues blocking application processing / timeliness to continuously drive improvement to this metric.

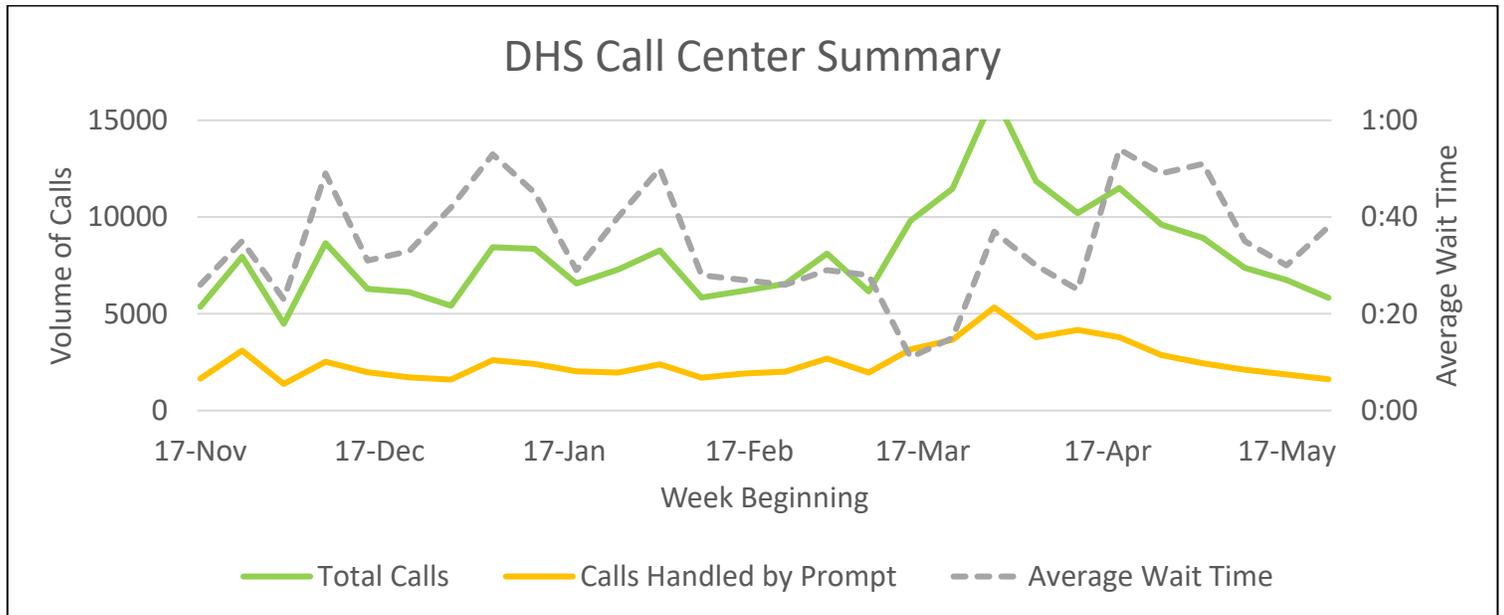


In May 2020, SNAP benefits were issued timely to nearly 89,700 households. Despite the impact of COVID-19, nearly 80% of new SNAP Applications were processed timely. The number of applications not processed timely represents 1% of our SNAP population receiving benefits.

Untimely May Applications | Timely Applications | Total SNAP Population

## CALL CENTER

In May, the average wait time was approximately 38 minutes. With the close of lobby facing operations during the COVID-19 pandemic, the DHS Call Center capacity was increased to accommodate the interviews and questions for public benefits.



## CCAP OFF-CYCLE PAYMENTS

Below are the total number of batch payments made to child care providers between May 19, 2020 and June 12, 2020.

Batch	Date Issued	# of Providers	Amount after Union/PAC removed
25	05/19/2020	680	\$2,779,786
25A	05/21/2020	11	\$8,805
25B	05/28/2020	9	\$3,883
26	06/02/2020	669	\$2,575,445
26A	06/04/2020	4	\$4,021
26B	06/12/2020	13	\$22,484

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (25, 25A & 25B)	700	\$2,792,474
Off-cycle (25A & 25B)	20	\$12,688
Provider off-cycle/total	2.86%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	0.45%	-

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (26, 26A & 26B)	686	\$2,601,950
Off-cycle (26A & 26B)	17	\$26,505
Providers off-cycle/total	2.48%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	1.02%	-

## LTSS INTERIM PAYMENTS

We continue to make progress in reducing the LTSS backlog of applications. As of this submission, there are 428 overdue LTSS applications pending state action.

Through the contingency process, which ensures nursing and assisted living facilities receive prompt reimbursement from the State, Rhode Island has paid out approximately 12.4 million dollars in interim payments to facilities for the state fiscal year 2020 so far (please refer to attached Medicaid Expenditures Report). We are in the process of identifying specific payments from various facilities to submit a schedule illustrating the dollar amount by facility.

Our payment reconciliation process remains ongoing as we continue to meet with long term care facilities across the state. In total, the state has paid approximately \$148.3 million we have collected about \$85,175,921 million in reconciliation payments so far from nursing home facilities. This represents approximately 57% of the total amount of contingency payments made.

## UPDATE ON RECERTIFICATIONS PROCESS

The State has verified that Medicaid renewals were appropriately initiated by the RI Bridges System in compliance with the CMS approved renewal plan.

## CORRESPONDENCE WITH FEDERAL PARTNERS

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) are important partners to the State. We continue to communicate regularly to review progress with the RIBridges system.

- There is no federal correspondence for this reporting period